

Insights, News & Events

ONE YEAR LATER: FP'S INTERACTIVE UNION ACTIVITY MAP REVEALS 5 KEY LABOR TRENDS

Insights
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Over the past year, Fisher Phillips' exclusive Union Organizing Activity Map continues to provide valuable insights into union trends across the country. This interactive tool aggregates data from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and tracks a variety of metrics by region, state, and date. The map, which is continuously updated, offers employers a real-time view of evolving labor trends and patterns across the country. What are the five biggest trends shaping the labor landscape as revealed by the map?

Access the map here:

[Union Organizing Activity Map](#)

1. Key NLRB Developments Are Reshaping the Labor Landscape

Since our last [Interactive Union Activity Map Insight](#), the NLRB has undergone significant changes that are contributing to an evolving labor landscape. These developments will no doubt influence future organizing trends captured in our data. Changes to captive audience meetings, a new Acting General Counsel, and the shifting political composition of the Board create new uncertainties that could slow or accelerate petition activity. As these decisions permeate the labor environment, we expect the data to reflect the practical impact on union strategies, employer responses, and organizing efforts nationwide.

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- **June 13, 2024** – [Supreme Court Clarifies NLRB Injunction Standard](#): In *Starbucks Corp. v. McKinney*, the Court ruled that the NLRB must satisfy the traditional four-factor test when seeking preliminary injunctions under Section 10(j) of the National Labor Relations Act, aligning the NLRB’s standards with those applied to other agencies.
- **November 13, 2024** – [Ban on Mandatory Captive Audience Meetings](#): The Board declared that mandatory “captive audience” meetings, where employers require employees to attend, violate workers’ rights under the Act.
- **January 27, 2025** – [Trump Fires General Counsel Abruzzo and Board Member Wilcox](#): This unprecedented move left the NLRB without a quorum, leading to legal challenges and concerns about the Board’s ability to function without a quorum.
- **February 14, 2025** – [Acting General Counsel Rolls Back Biden-era Memos](#): The new Acting GC rescinded guidance targeting non-competes, stay-or-pay provisions, and captive audience meetings, signaling a shift toward employer-friendly policies.
- **March 6, 2025** – [Court Orders Reinstatement of NLRB Member](#): A federal judge reversed Wilcox’s removal, restoring a 2-1 majority for Democrat appointees. This ensures that some of the more controversial Biden-era NLRB decisions will not be overturned – for now. We can expect this matter to work its way up to the Supreme Court for final resolution in the near future.

Key Takeaway: These developments signal a period of uncertainty for employers navigating union activity. More recent changes may slow some aggressive enforcement efforts seen in prior years, but key rulings and shifting guidance highlight the importance of closely monitoring NLRB activity. Staying informed will be critical as new leadership charts a different course in the months ahead.

2. Union Membership Trends

The latest [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) release highlights continued shifts in union membership:

- The overall union membership rate dropped slightly to 9.9% in 2024, with just 5.9% of private-sector workers belonging to a union.

- Public-sector workers remain heavily unionized at a 32.2% membership rate, more than five times that of the private sector.
- Hawaii and New York continue to lead in unionization rates, while the Carolinas and South Dakota rank among the lowest.

[The map reveals](#) notable seasonal spikes in union petition filings, with numbers jumping in the Spring and Fall:

- April 2024 saw 236 petitions filed
- May 2024 had 215 petitions filed
- September 2024 had 207 petitions filed

While the data shows these months were the most active, several factors could explain the timing:

- April and May follow first-quarter events like bonuses, financial reports, or staffing changes that could prompt organizing efforts.
- September may align with the end of summer, when employees return from vacations and refocus on workplace issues.
- Petitions during these months could also be timed to build leverage ahead of major holidays or fiscal year-end periods when employers may feel additional pressure.

Key Takeaway: Although the reasons for these spike speculative, the data suggests that organizing activity to increase during times of year when workplace and business cycles shift, creating potential opportunities union campaigns.

3. Unions Driving the Most Activity

[Our interactive map](#) makes it easy to discover which unions are driving the most petition activity, and once again, three unions led the way:

- The International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), known for drivers, freight, and warehouse workers.
- The Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the largest healthcare union.

- The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), representing workers in retail, food processing, and other industries.

However, since last year, the below unions were each involved in over 100 petition filings:

- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), known for representing electricians and utility workers, filed 136 petitions.
- The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) (representing heavy equipment operators and mechanics) filed 127 petitions.
- The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), representing workers across aerospace, manufacturing, and transportation industries, filed 110 petitions.

Key Takeaway: The data shows that a wide range of are consistently pursuing organizing efforts, not just the largest or most well-known players. This highlights the importance of employer engagement for employers in traditionally unionized industries, as well as those less accustomed to union activity, to review organizing trends that could impact their workforce.

4. Smaller Workforces Remain Key Driver of Organizing Efforts

One notable trend [our map continues to show](#) is that most petitions involve relatively small groups of employees. Over the past year, the majority of petitions were filed for units of 50 employees or fewer.

The Boston region saw petitions with as few as five employees, while these regions had petitions with more than 500 employees:

- Atlanta
- Los Angeles
- Detroit
- Philadelphia

Key Takeaway: Many employers assume union organizing is a concern only for large companies. But the data shows unions continue targeting small groups of employees making even small and mid-sized businesses vulnerable to organizing efforts.

5. Pay Attention to Geographic Hotspots and Quiet Zones

Certain cities continue to stand out as key areas for union organizing activity. Over the past year, [our map shows that](#) the largest number of petitions were filed in:

- **Seattle** – 254 cases
- **Boston** – 165 cases
- **Baltimore** – 138 cases

Meanwhile, the lowest levels of activity were recorded in:

- **Denver** – 59 cases
- **Phoenix** – 57 cases
- **Pittsburgh** – 42 cases

Key Takeaway: The data reflects clear differences in organizing activity across regions. Employers with operations in areas seeing more petitions should stay alert, but those in lower-activity cities should not overlook the potential for organizing efforts to surface.

Why Should Employers Pay Attention to These Trends?

Union activity is shifting, and no industry or region is immune. [Our interactive map](#) remains a key tool to monitor these developments in real-time. For employers, staying alert to these trends is critical to reducing risk and avoiding surprises. The best strategy is a proactive one.

Reviewing developments, both nationally and regionally, allows employers to take early action and create workplaces where employees feel valued. By focusing on communication and addressing issues proactively, employers can ensure their workforce sees no value in third-party representation. The Fisher Phillips Labor Relations Practice Group is ready to help you evaluate your strategy and prepare for what's next.

Conclusion

Make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to get the most up-to-date information direct to your inbox. For further information, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the authors of this Insight, [or any member of our Labor Relations group](#).